

# Historic and Cultural Resources

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PLAN  
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Historic Resources 8.1  
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Historic Downtown Square



White Hangar at Drake Field Airport

## 8.1 Historic Resources

**RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY.** Fayetteville offers rich and diversified historic resources. Numerous historic neighborhoods, buildings and landscapes provide both architectural and cultural reminders of the historical past that contributes to the character of the City.

The City of Fayetteville and its stakeholders have successfully integrated many of the City's historically significant structures into functionally viable uses for present day residential and commercial business activity. This has been accomplished through revitalization, restoration, and renovation efforts, as well as a community-wide commitment to the preservation of Fayetteville's historical past. Downtown Fayetteville, centered around the Square, is a striking example of the community's commitment to the integration of its historical past with the social and economic dynamics of its present.

With the exception of the City Administration Building, historically city government has taken a laissez-faire approach to preservation, leaving such efforts to private initiatives. For example, the Old Post Office, Eason Building and Lewis Hardware Store - all fundamental elements of the downtown square - were privately restored.

The City of Fayetteville took its first step toward a proactive stance on preservation in March of 1979, when the Board of Directors created the Fayetteville Historic District Commission and endowed it with all the authority allowed under State Act 484. Lacking leadership and direction, the Commission languished for over a decade. In 1989 and 1990 the City hired its first professional planners, who began to work closely with the Commission. The Commission was disbanded in 2003, but was reinstated in 2006 in a renewed effort to establish a commercial historic district. Since then, Fayetteville has increased the number of historic districts throughout the city and established its first Local Ordinance District, White Hangar at Drake Field.

**HISTORIC RESOURCES.** Numerous districts, landscapes, and structures have qualified for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. As the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation, the National Register of Historic Places can list historic properties that meet specific criteria, but the register does not accept all significant historical structures if the criteria are not met. It's the community's responsibility to preserve its past and protect its story.



*Fay Jones Architecture*



*Mt. Nord Residence*

**Districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places.** There are presently five established historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places within the City of Fayetteville. The largest district, Washington-Willow, lies mostly within the Masonic Addition, the first addition to the original town. Washington-Willow consists of 105 primary structures sited along two north-south streets and five traversing east-west streets. The district encompasses approximately 37 acres. Nineteen of the buildings possess special significance. Twenty-five do not contribute to the primary character of the district. All the buildings are residential. Forty-six of the structures were built between 1890 and 1910. This district is believed to contain the highest concentration of significant structures worthy of preservation in Fayetteville.

The Washington-Willow District is renowned for its attractive and prestigious character. Architectural styles within the district range from Greek Revival to ranch style and include various Victorian themes, Classical Revival, bungalow, modern workers cottages and 20th Century period homes. The area has never really confronted hard times; thus, buildings have been well maintained even during periods of growth and change. The district's cohesiveness stems from visible boundaries, its residential character, well maintained homes, numerous large mature trees lining the streets, and a large concentration of buildings possessing architectural merit.

Although the archaeological potential of this district has not been fully explored, there has been some productive excavation (salvage archeology) behind the Headquarters House revealing evidence of early Indian and white settlers. It is suspected that further archaeological remains exist and that the area is a significant archaeological resource.

The second historic district is Mt. Nord. The district consists of one distinctive block in Fayetteville situated on a hilltop to the north of the City's historic downtown commercial square. Five residential structures of wood frame and masonry construction built between 1900 and 1925 comprise the Mount Nord Historic District. Each structure contributes to the integrity of the district by virtue of its architectural character, its natural and physical setting and its visual association.

This district was once the City's most prestigious residential area and consequently attracted some of Fayetteville's most prominent and successful citizens. The landscape, atop one of Fayetteville's many rolling hills, reinforces the area's strong physical definition. Although a less eminent residential neighborhood than when constructed, the district is now a focal point for a larger residential area that emerged in the 1920's and 1930's. This





*Walker-Stone House*



*Clinton House Museum*

residential eminence is what attributes to the successful retention of the district's original integrity.

The Wilson Park Historic District, located just to the north of Fayetteville's historic commercial downtown, extends roughly between College Avenue on the east, Wilson Avenue on the West, Maple Street on the South and Louise Street on the north. Exclusively residential in nature, the district contains a total of seventy buildings spread over roughly twelve blocks. The entire district is characterized by hilly, tree-covered lots connected by relatively narrow streets, all of which lend the Wilson Park Historic District an unspoiled, rustic ambience.

The initial development of the district occurred in the early part of the century during a boom period for Fayetteville. By 1910, the population had reached 5,000 and Fayetteville Lumber and Cement, Hill City Lumber and Red Star Spoke Factory were doing record business. The tons of produce and grain leaving Fayetteville yearly kept three train lines running. Canning factories and cold storage companies were built to package the produce for shipping. Many permanent homes were established during this period within the district.

The West Dickson Commercial Historic District was designated as a National Register District in 2009. "The history of the Dickson Street area dates back to 1835, to the original survey of the town of Fayetteville, and its commercial growth began in earnest after the arrival of the St. Louis - San Francisco Railroad to Dickson Street in 1881. Fifty-seven resources; 35 contributing resources and 21 noncontributing resources comprise the West Dickson Street Commercial Historic District. One building, the Frisco Depot, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places." (Arkansas Historic Preservation Program) Dickson Street is considered one of the most popular entertainment districts in Arkansas with a wide variety of music venues, restaurants and local shops. The University Historic District was added to the National Register in 2009.

A portion of the University of Arkansas campus is the most recent historic district in Fayetteville to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This district is bounded by Garland Avenue, Maple Street, Arkansas Avenue, and District Street and contains 15 buildings and five landscape areas dating back to 1875. These buildings range from the iconic Old Main, constructed in the second empire style, to the international style Fine Arts Center designed by well-known local architect Edward Durell Stone.



**The Lafayette Street and Maple Street Overpasses.** As a result of an increase in the number of automobiles in Fayetteville, the Lafayette Street and Maple Street Overpasses were constructed over the Frisco Railroad Lines in the late 1930s to replace two wooden pedestrian bridges connecting the City with the University of Arkansas campus. The construction of these Art Deco style overpasses was funded by the Works Progress Administration through President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. These bridges were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1995, indicating their historic significance worthy of preservation.

**The Evergreen Cemetery.** This site was originally a family farm located near Downtown Fayetteville and was used as a private burial ground until 1970 (the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections, Manuscript Collection 926). The Evergreen Cemetery is now one of the largest historic cemeteries in Northwest Arkansas. Many notable Arkansans are buried here, including Lafayette Gregg, architect Edward Durell Stone, Governor Archibald Yell, and Senator J. William Fulbright.

**Heritage Trail.** In the late 1830s, the Trail of Tears passed through Fayetteville and, in 1858, the Butterfield Stage Coach route passed through Fayetteville. The Trail of Tears is a designated National Historic Trail, and efforts are underway to give the Butterfield Stagecoach route the same designation. Both these trails, as well as a Civil War trail are part of the Northwest Arkansas Heritage Trail system.

## 8.2 Cultural Resources

**ART RESOURCES, PLANS AND PROGRAMS.** In 1992, the Walton Arts Center opened its doors to the public, the product of a six-year collaboration among city government, the University of Arkansas and the private sector. Located on the corner of West Avenue and Dickson Street, The Walton Arts Center Campus includes the Walton Arts Center, the Nadine Baum Studios and Just Off Center, which houses administrative offices. The Center has a yearly budget of over \$6 million and hosts over 350 events with over 140,000 attendees. In addition to nighttime performances and weekend matinees, the center hosts daytime performances for over 40,000 students each year.

The Walton Arts Center holds the Baum Walker Hall, which has 1200 seats, the Box Office, two galleries, an art studio, and the smaller Starr Theatre. The Bradberry Amphitheater provides an outdoor venue adjacent to the center. Each year, the Walton Arts Center attracts world-class performances from Broadway, in dance and in music, and it is the official home of the Northwest Arkansas Symphony.







Wilson Park Castle



Fayetteville Public Library



The Nadine Baum Studios, located on the corner of West Avenue and Spring Street, houses five interactive studios, one gallery and Studio Theatre. Throughout the year, children and adult classes are offered after school, in the evening, and during special summer sessions. The studio has also become the home of Theatre Squared, a regional theater company.

Other community offerings provide an array of cultural and performing arts resources, including the Arkansas Music Pavilion (AMP), the only open-air pavilion in the region. This theater seats 2,500 people and features pop, rock and country musicians and has been added to the venues managed by the Walton Arts Center.

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS.** The university theater and music departments offer eight fully mounted plays, five student-directed plays and numerous choral and instrumental performances to the community. The university is also home to the 70,000 seat Reynolds Razorback Stadium, the 20,000 seat Bud Walton Arena, world-renound track and field and baseball programs, all of which provide a unique atmosphere to the city. In addition, the university attracts world-renowned political and literary figures to the campus, benefiting the entire Fayetteville community.

**PARKS AND RECREATION.** The City currently maintains 70 developed parks that include 10 acres of ornamental gardens. The parks provide recreational facilities, sponsoring athletic programs and maintaining 29 playgrounds. The Parks and Recreation Program also hosts a concerts in the parks series during the summer, featuring local and regional performance artists.

**FARMER'S MARKET.** With the downtown square gardens as a backdrop, open-air vendors sell produce and handmade items to the community every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning from April 1 through mid-November. Plants, trees, herbs, vegetables, fruits, perennials, annuals, pottery, candles, watercolors and other items are regularly featured. Farmer's Market vendors also sell their wares in the Mill District on Thursday evenings and at the Ozark Botanical Gardens on Sunday mornings.

**PUBLIC ART.** The Walton Arts Center features outdoor sculptures by J. Seward Johnson, and the Peace Prayer Fountain, a bronze sculpture designed by local artist Hank Kaminsky, was introduced to the Town Center Plaza in 2002. Wilson Park features "The Castle," a whimsical structure completed in 1981 that delights children and adults alike. Frank Williams, a local artist, won the contest to create public art to cover an unsafe and unattractive area of the park. The Blair Public Library is currently in the process of gathering community input on how the library should incorporate art into its grounds and

facilities, and the city's trail system has seen the installation of multiple public art pieces, of both temporary and permanent nature.

**BLAIR PUBLIC LIBRARY.** The first Fayetteville Public Library opened in 1917, occupying two rooms of the Washington County Courthouse. On June 4, 1962, a new library facility that eventually expanded to 31,500 square feet opened on Dickson Street near the Washington-Willow Historic District.

As the City continued to grow, the need for a new library led to the construction of the Blair Public Library located on the corner of School and Mountain Street in the downtown area. The construction was funded by a 1% 18-month sales tax, which 75% of the voters approved. The 88,000 square-foot facility opened in September 2004 and was the first building in Arkansas to be registered with the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certification (L.E.E.D.) program. Through a grant from the International City Managers' Association in 2009, University engineering students and library staff installed a 13.5 kilowatt solar panel system which is enough to power 2.5 Arkansas homes. The system reduces the electricity cost of the library, and citizens can track the amount of power being harvested at a kiosk inside the building.

The Blair Library is a multi-use building that was constructed to take advantage of the site's opportunities and location. It is complete with a café, terrace, community meeting rooms and multiple computer labs for different age groups in addition to a collection of 272,807 items, including books, magazines, CDs, DVDs, Blu-rays, DVD players, e-books and e-readers, laptops, downloadable and CD-format audiobooks and multimedia parenting kits. In 2010, more than 1 million items were borrowed from the library, for the third year in a row. The library has more than 64,000 cardholders, and in 2010, there were 553,802 library visitors. The library hosted 1,269 free public events in 2010, and 50,944 people of all ages attended those programs. With these statistics, in addition to extensive, innovative programming for adults and children alike, the Blair Library won the 2005 Thompson Gale/*Library Journal* Library of the Year Award, one of the industry's highest honors.

